Tells the Facts and Names the Names

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NOTES FROM THE BIG EMPTY

BY BRUCE ANDERSON

Democrats in action? How about in Mendocino County, California, a great big rugged rural place with 85,000 people strewn over an area larger than Vermont.

The short history of the Democratic Party takeover of Mendocino County goes like this: Beginning in 1967, thousands of hippies drove north on Highway 101 from the Bay Area, headed "back to the land". The land they were going back to was cheap, and got cheaper the farther north their used Volvos carried them. But when the urban refugees, themselves refugees from the suburbs and everything represented by suburbs, got back to the land, there was no hippie way to support themselves other than dope production, and dope's a high stress enterprise given the cops, thieves and the IRS. So a lot of the hippies dusted off their diplomas, cleaned up and drove down out of the hills to get themselves public jobs, which in the perennially tight economy of Mendocino County are the only jobs that pay college people the kind of money college people think they deserve.

The hippies were re-entering the society they'd spent their youths being contemptuous of. And being middle-class and civic-minded, they soon elected other hippies, or hip-symps, to a few low-level offices, then some mid-level offices, until Mendocino County's public jobs were entirely dominated by the love generation.

And public policy in Mendocino County grew crueler by the year, in direct proportion to the re-entry return of the formerly estranged. For $30,000 a year, a flower child would put the figurative, the programmatic boots to anybody a rung down the ladder.

Pay an old hippie with a law degree $140,000 a year with the full fringe pack-

(**Anderson** *continued on page 2)*

The World Trade in Body Parts

Resurrectionists

BY PETER LINEBAUGH

There are about 20,000 organ transplants a year. The body parts trade, whether it is blood, kidneys, hearts, pituitary glands, corneas, heart-valves, or skin, is world-wide and flourishing. Transplant surgery will in one way or another be part of global circuits of exchange, such as the one depicted in Stephen Frear's film "Dirty Pretty Things."

The sanctity of the body collapses under market demands which conceal the class relationship. The commodity form itself disguises the class inequity: organs are 'spare parts' 'gifts of life,' 'donations,' a fatuous medical rhetoric which renders invisible the human sacrifice. Donors tend to be prisoners, guest workers, debtors, mental patients, undocumented workers. The UN convention against Transnational Organised Crime includes extraction of organs under the trafficking of humans. So, the traffic may be compared to human sacrifice or the slave trade.

The business strikes at the essence of neo-liberalism, just as it was to classical liberalism. It presupposes the autonomy of the individual possession, the sanctity of contract, and free trade - and yet the business remains scandalous. Scandal generally comes to our attention from the supply side of the equation. At UCLA this spring the director of the Willed Body Program was arrested for harvesting and selling body parts from the cadavers (about 175 bodies a year). The "insatiable killing machine" of the Chinese criminal justice system, is partly driven by the demand for fresh organs. The organs of prisoners in China have been harvested before they were actually dead. Group executions have been arranged in China for purpose of body harvesting. In Israel the former director of a Tel Aviv hospital promoted international trafficking in human organs. The Israeli health system enabled a global network to function: organ donors were identified in the poor neighborhoods of Brazil's Recife, the organ or the donor was then flown to Durban, South Africa, for transplantation into Israeli recipients. Madras slums, Brazilian favelas, South African townships provide centers of this geography while specialized "kidney belts" have emerged in Romania, Moldava, Georgia, Iraq, Turkey, Philippines.

If the supply side of the equation is suffused with scandal, the demand side of the equation is also dubious. Unscrupulous doctors have encouraged an obscene hubris which relies upon the longing of eternal life. The "scarcity" of organs is conjured by the medical complex and plays on the fear, denial, and refusal of death of weakened and suffering patients. The "waiting list" is a notional or virtual concept which tends to the elevation of prices, like the "free market" itself.

These are arguments of Nancy Scheper-Hughes who is the cofounder and director of Organs Watch, a medical human rights and documentation center at UC Berkeley. She and her colleagues have become, so to speak, the grave-watchers, or the body-watchers, of the planet. Her investigations have led her to conclude that "'a kind of apartheid medicine' divides the world into two distinctly different populations of 'organ suppliers' and 'organ receivers'". She says "in general, the movement and flow of living donor

(**Linebaugh** *continued on page 4)*

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(**Anderson** *continued from page 1)*

age for him and Mrs. Lib and the kids, and he'll kill, which is what Mendocino County's seven liberal judges, all of them Up From Hippie, do five days a week every week in the Mendocino County Courthouse. "Life without, punk, but I feel your pain".

Congressman Mike Thompson picked up a Purple Heart in Vietnam. He said when he got home a hippie spit on him. Thompson runs unopposed for re-election. The Republicans don't bother putting money into an opponent because they've got Thompson who's just as good.

Thompson presides over an apparatus of career officeholders like himself who replace each other when one of them moves on to another public office.

If no public office is immediately available to a term-limited old boy, the Democrats park him or her on a state board of some kind at a hundred thousand a year for one meeting a week until another old boy leaves another safe seat open.

The electoral base camp for rotating offices consists almost entirely of public employees, whose funding depends on Democrats at the state and federal levels. The edubloc votes as one for Democrats, the Democrats send money and promise to send more without raising taxes. People employed at various levels of government – and that's a lot of people in Mendocino County, one third of everyone employed – vote Democratic because the Democrats can be depended on to make more government, especially of the kind that keeps on re-electing them. What the Democrats have managed to do on the North coast is create an old fashioned political machine that creates jobs for people who believe that Democrats are "progressive". Maybe they are in some places, but not here. Here, in real life practice, Democrats are Bush Republicans. To use one of their favorite words, Democrats are "facilitators" of environmental and social destruction.

This is the county whose sheriff and district attorney, libertarian Republicans, ran for office promising to decriminalize marijuana. Which they did, and both were re-elected by even greater margins the second time they ran. They've also passed out more concealed weapons permits than any DA and Sheriff in the state. They're at odds with Democrats and Republicans on most issues, but you won't hear a critical word from either of them ever on the deficiencies of the career officeholders of the Democratic machine.

We have a thriving Green Party that votes for Democrats and steadfastly avoids running candidates for local office. When the rare Green takes on the Democrats, he's either stabbed by Democrats or denounced by Greens for not having been sanctioned by them. When Green guy Dave Severn took on a semi-psychotic Democrat for county supervisor, the Mendocino Green Party refused to endorse Severn. When an elected school board trustee and registered Green signed up for the Green Congressional primary this year hoping to oppose Congressman Thompson in the general election, a recreational candidate who runs for office on one minority party ballot or another every election, just happened to find $500 to register to run against the viable Green in the Green primary. The recreational candidate, who is neither seen nor heard on any issue between elections, beat the legitimate Green in the primary because she's a woman and she has a Mexican-sounding surname. The legit Green would have caused incumbent Thompson some serious anxiety in his re-election race against a token Republican because Thompson, like Gore and Kerry on the national level, inspires either zero enthusiasm or negative enthusiasm of the I'll-vote-for-the-Greens-just-to-screw-things-up-for-the-two-party-dictatorship variety.

Congressman Thompson, Wine Country representative all the way and the industry's main man in Washington, was instrumental in getting the ban on methyl bromide delayed for five more years on behalf of his industry padrones. Thompson, not deigning to take out the necessary permits, bulldozed a parcel of land he owns in nearby Lake County so he could put in his own little vineyard, rightly assuming the authorities would pretend not to know he did it.

The wine people are heavily Democratic because Democrats, they seem to think, have panache; Republicans don't. It is hard to imagine John Ashcroft at a wine tasting, not hard to imagine Bill and Hillary at one, the crazed AG is not a likely white wine and brie guy. But a rhetorically liberal upscale couple would be right at home in a setting of the superficial and the silly.

Pumped down into the soil to depths of 12 feet, methyl bromide sterilizes the earth as grape vine site prep. Immigrant Mexicans, dressed in protective moonsuits, apply the lethal stuff, and often die in industry accidents involving ag or industrial wine chemicals, especially nitrogen, because the wine people, thanks to Democrats, are basically exempt from industrial safety standards.

The wine industry, heavy consumers of pesticides and herbicides, is environmentally devastating and socially indifferent; they clearcut large swaths of land with a thoroughness the most demented logger can only dream of doing, then lay on the chemicals year round. Socially, the industry provides little to no worker housing for the immigrant labor upon which it depends. The wine industry, which seldom pays better than minimum wages for seasonal work, rises up as one to crush UFW organizing attempts like so many grapes, and fires any worker who complains without so much as promising anything resembling a fair hearing.

One spring morning back in the 1970s, as a clusters of little hippie kids waited for the big yellow school bus to carry them to classrooms as dull and reactionary as the ones their alienated parents had fled for California's backwoods, a Louisiana-Pacific helicopter, spraying the freshly-logged hills with herbicides to prevent non-commercial re-vegetation, heedlessly sprayed the little Rainbows and Karmas as they waited for their school buses. The hippies mobilized and passed an aerial spray ban. Within months, state Democrats, including those elected from this area, led by Willie Brown, all of their pockets stuffed with corporate ag cash, passed legislation that decreed that individual counties couldn't regulate herbicides and pesticides.

Among the re-entry hippies who dominate Mendocino County's public institutions are too many lawyers. Law degreed hippies

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were quick to note that Mendocino County's far-flung communities were served by one-day-a-week justice courts whose judges were "lay persons", i.e., non-lawyers. Nobody in Mendocino County was unhappy with the lay judges in any organized sense of unhappiness; lay judges were a non-issue. People living in the deep outback liked their judges and their courts the way they were, but the lawyers scented opportunity. The lawyers, especially the under-employed ones barely able to earn enough to support the hepatitis lifestyle they'd moved to the country to pursue, began to say, "The quality of justice is likely to be inferior if the person dispensing it isn't properly trained. We really should have lawyers sitting as judges in these justice courts". The law was changed, and the lay judges, who had dispensed Mendocino County justice for a hundred years, were gone. Trained legal professionals, fresh from the big naked solstice piles up in the hills, took over Mendocino County's justice courts.

There's been a dramatic change in the quality of justice. Not only are more people than ever going to jail, a new lawyer judge fell in love with an armed robber defendant and, time and again, tossed the charges against his boy friend until people said, "Hey! If this guy would rob people over the hill we wouldn't mind you sleeping with him, your honor. But we live here!"

The lawyer judge went, but the judge who replaced him, an exhibitionist, kept flashing his court's female staffers. He finally went off for "counseling", but came back after a few months of working as a judge an hour away; his judicial pals said privately they'd told him to be sure to wear clothes under his robes, and keep his gonads off the scales of justice.

Lay judges made $300 a month for one-day-a-week. The lawyer judges make $140,000 a year plus fringes for themselves and their families. They can work or not work, as they please; they can stay home and draw their base pay or travel around the state at public expense to sit as visiting judges.

We've got more of these $140,000 judges than any population our size in the state. And the justice courts? They're gone, centralized so the judges don't have to travel much. The elevation of hippie judges to superior court status was sold as "reorganization" and "increased efficiency". The Democrat-dominated legislature sold us that one.

The quality of justice now that long-time pot smokers are presiding? If you can afford a well-connected lawyer you get off; if you can't you go to the state pen, and the people sending you are all NPR listeners, Democrats, liberals, Clintonians.

A 19-year-old kid recently got sent off on, as they say, an L-WOP, life without the possibility of parole. He got a one-day jury trial during which his public defender called no witnesses on his behalf, assigned no investigators to look at the facts of the case, wrapped up by denouncing the kid as a very bad person who'd committed a very bad murder. Her defense? The boy hadn't been properly read his rights. The jury was back within minutes with a unanimous guilty verdict. Even the cops were stomping indignantly around the Courthouse at the Public Defender's grotesquely inept defense.

The L-WOP boy's two accomplices, one of whom did the crime, murder, got 15 and 19 years respectively. Everyone involved in the case's second murder, the judicial murder of this L-WOP kid now buried for life at Soledad, is a registered Democrat. The sentencing judge is an active Democrat whose wife works in the local Democrat Assemblyperson's office.

We even have an "alternate public defender's" office, a jobs program for under-employed but hip-lib lawyers. The way this works, and it works at enormous additional expense to taxpayers, is when one of the regular public defenders claims "a conflict of interest", the "alternate" is summoned. The conflict can be as vague as a remote commercial association from, say, five years ago when the defendant attended the same wedding as one of the attorneys in the public defender's office. The faux scrupulousness is really just a way to spread the legal work around the Democrats who, of course, delude themselves into thinking they're fighters for the underdog.

Here Democrats are Bush Republicans. To use one of their favorite words, Dems are 'facilitators' of environmental and social destruction.

We also have a family court magistrate; and two court administrators; and privatized court reporters (two of whom are girlfriends of sitting judges), and family court mediators, invariably ex-hippies whose own lives are hopelessly screwed up but drawing nice pay to help other fucked up people with their marital woes, usually making them worse, and we have victim witness coordinators; and a triple-sized probation department; and family court advocates; and on and on – at least a thousand 'helping professionals', and not a Republican in the bunch, and the whole mob of them committed Democrats of the type who write letters to the editor denouncing Ralph Nader.

Mendocino County, having gone big time for Dean, later went big time for Kerry. Our local public radio station, partially funded by WalMart and the local wine industry, both of which are entirely dependent on grotesquely exploited labor, bills itself as "Free Speech Radio, Mendocino County". It's dominated by Democrats, and there are exactly two hours a month of aggressively vetted semi-free speech. Pacifica Network-type Stalinists answer the phones, and if you aren't talking Kucinich or Kerry or Mumia or their local surrogates, you don't get to talk. No dissent is allowed on air. Ever. But the Democrats get all the air time they want, and since there are no Republicans who either tune in or call in during the two whole hours a month any old body can reach right out and audio touch a tax-paid censor, it's all Democrats all the time.

As in the rest of America, the Democrats stay in office here in Ecotopia by routing funding to public employees. School people and public employees vote as a bloc for Democrats because Democrats fund them. Local food banks estimate that a minimum of 20% of Mendocino County children under the age of five don't get enough to eat, and many Mendocino County schools fail to meet prevailing educational standards, low as they are. The Mendocino County Jail, because it has had to take over the care and feeding of the ill because Mendocino County's helping professionals, many of them active Democrats, and all of them Democratic voters although occasionally registered Green, aren't equal to the task; the jail is so overcrowded it regularly releases its least violent inmates after they've served a third to half their sentences.

The proprietor of a fancy, ocean view inn is "environmental chair" of California's Democratic Party. During grassroots demonstrations against the possibility that the Pacific off the Mendocino Coast might eventually be drilled for oil, Democrats like Gray (**Anderson** *continued on page 6*)

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(**Linebaugh** *continued from page 1*)

organs - mostly kidneys - is from South to North, from poor to rich, from black and brown to white, and from female to male bodies".

William Cobbett, the blunt radical journalist of 19th century England, inveighed against the 1832 Anatomy Act in similar terms: "What! the poor laborer, who, after having toiled all his life; after having brought himself to death, at a premature old age, very likely, by the excess of toil; is he, because in his old age he is compelled to resort to the parish for relief, to be harassed in his last moments with the thought that in a few minutes the butchers will have their knives in his belly, and be hacking and chopping him to pieces like the carcass of a dead dog? Oh! no."

That emphatic negation had its beginning in the popular outcry against Burke and Hare. In 1828 William Burke was hanged (with his partner, Hare) for murdering sixteen (at least) people in Edinburgh in order to supply the town's celebrated anatomists. Ever since, the eponymous verb "to burke" has meant the action of compressing mouth and nostrils to cause suffocation, and by extension, any attempt to smother the truth. Burke and Hare provided the model of the gothic representation of the trade, but they were not the only ones, as Sarah Wise brilliantly demonstrates in her book *The Italian Boy, a tale of murder and body snatching in 18th century London*. (Holt. The fresh earth at the bottom of the garden, the satisfied cat purring in the corne)r, the repulsive stench arising from the disused well, the empty wicker hamper positioned just outside the hospital side door: here are the clues that resurrectionists have been at work, and which Sarah Wise pieces together in this tale.

Sarah Wise was inspired by a visit to Bethnal Green where she sensed an historic taint and confirmed that memory has a way of residing in the urban topoi, as if London districts had a life of their own. She is expert on the topographical minutiae of the vast city which provided the template of Blake's mythology as it provides 'the Knowledge' of the London cab driver. She has an excellent ear for the various lingoes of the town. She does not get lost in its 'subcultures' or 'tribes'. The book is written in the manner of a whodunit; it is excellently illustrated; it should become prominent in the weekend reading of the lively souls at UC Berkeley's Organ Watch.

Sarah Wise reckons that in 1831 there were perhaps seven body-snatching gangs in London, each with two to fifteen members which "supplied" the "needs" of five hundred med students who would require three bodies each over their sixteen months training. One of these gangs was led by John Bishop and Thomas Williams, London body-snatchers, or "resurrection men" to use the not quite blasphemous cockney term. Their ghoulish work was to obtain cadavers for sale to the teaching surgeons at the hospitals and the anatomists at the private schools. The surgeons called the cadaver "the Subject," the resurrectionist called it "the Thing." Bishop and Williams were accused, found guilty, and hanged for murdering Carlo Ferrari, whose fourteen-year old body was dumped from a sack onto the stone dissecting floor and found to be suspiciously "fresh" by surgeons who duly notified the police. Bishop and Williams had been at the trade for some years; Bishop estimated that he alone had supplied between five hundred and a thousand "subjects" or "things" to the surgeons. No wonder that when he was hanged between 30,000 and 40,000 came to watch.

There are two chapters on street children and the homeless–"wretches" she calls them–that are among the best, the transients, and vagrants, which were essential as both cause and effect to industrialization. She presents them as a kind of low theatre of the streets, the fantoccini performers, the figurinai from the Po Valley, the picturesque characters, and the beggars. Her chapter on Smithfield and the livestock shambles compares the carcass butchers to the surgeons, or what Cobbett called the "body-cutters". At a time when a weaver in Bethnal Green could make 5 shillings after a 72-hour week, Sir Astley Cooper, the most reknown surgeon of his era, charged 10 pounds for his course of lectures and 10 pounds for the dissections. Despite proficiency with knife and saw, his work as a healer remained hit or miss: while he removed a tumor from George IV's scalp he failed to find the bullet in Garibaldi's ankle though it was staring him in the face.

"In a few minutes the butchers will have their knives in his belly," William Cobbett wrote, "and be hacking and chopping him to pieces like the carcass of a dead dog?"

Wise writes with frank admiration for Charles Dickens, and if you enjoyed any of the versions of Oliver Twist, written 1837-8, you won't be disappointed by this historical backup which realizes similar vivacity. However, unlike Henry Mayhew, Dickens notoriously developed a sentimental approach to the urban proletariat that succeeded in obliterating its political self-organization - Chartism, Owenism, feminism, socialism, communism, or trade unionism. "The poor Italian boy" was sentimentalized in ballad, broadside, and engraving. Disquiet tended to be palliated by drugs and drink, not collective action.

She has chapters on Newgate prison and on the 1829 Metropolitan Police. The police was conceived by Robert Peel as a means of having some of the poor police the rest of the poor. The Peelers were the first uniformed, armed, centralized, police. It was led by Joseph Sadler Thomas who in addition to leading the investigation into 'the Italian boy,' developed the baton charge against demonstrations and who was responsible for the Calthorpe Street affair (1832) when a coroner's jury returned a verdict of "justifiable homicide" of a police constable killed by a crowd of the National Union of the Working Classes which was protecting an American flag. We never find out why the NUWC wanted to protect the Stars and Stripes. Indeed, we don't find out about the brave act of jury nullification when popular sovereignty directly affects the Law.

Sarah Wise gives due consideration to two outstanding changes, one social, one political. First, the stupendous growth of the city from one million to one and a half million people from 1801 to 1831, formed a metropolis of the young, the proletarian, and the homeless. They were outside the care, control, and surveillance of parish watch and ward; alienation was their urban condition. Second, the crisis of the Reform Bill of 1832 when one seventh of the adult male population was enfranchised brought into power the English bourgeoisie waving the banner of classical liberalism: progress, privatization, and free trade. Utilitarianism was its

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program and it included Science, and naturally, Anatomy.

Patterns first formed in England - in this case, the London underworld, the Gothic horrors, the sewage system beneath the streets, the city of orphans and homeless, the rough solidarity of criminal gangs, the sprawling giganticism of the metropolis - have become the form and pressure of world cities. But in England this was not known at the time, thus everything that happened was an 'original' and unprecedented, though commonplace now. What we know as general, they knew as particular. This is why so much England history appears as antiquarian, or devoid of generalization, or where generalization appears as assumption rather than as conclusion. It is also related to the philosophical predilection to empiricism - "facts, facts, facts". And urban crime is reduced to the detective story.

Sarah Wise calls her tale a "puzzle;" her history appears as a whodunit. The virtues of the approach are the virtues of this well-written book are: a) concentration on documentary evidence, b) the unities of space and time, c) the promise of forensic justice, and d) if not always the happy ending, then loose ends tied up. The suspense of the whodunit depends on the prior knowledge of to-whom-was-it-done? This whodunit breaks down in the doubt which is never resolved about the identity of the Italian boy. The method is inadequate to the problem, because detective work cannot right the wrongs of the proletariat whose anonymity is both a mark of dehumanization and a defense against the state. The problem is less one of individuals than one of class. We know the names of Burke and Hare, but not of all their victims. The same goes for Bishop and Williams who could not even count the bodies they snatched much less name them. The burker is known; his victims, the burked, are not. Brilliant as she is at making the past come singularly alive, the story Sarah Wise tells was not unique.

From Karl Marx to E.P. Thompson the view has been expressed that what happened in England showed the rest of the world an image of its own future: the workhouse, the eighteen-hour working day, the enclosure of lands, child labor, the making of the working class, the gray science of political economy, were foundations first laid down in British experience for the subsequent empires of capitalism to build on. "Causes which were lost in England might, in Asia or Africa, yet be won," wrote Thompson. 'The names are different but the tale is told of thee,' Marx quoted Horace.

The economics and medicine of the traffic (often the view from above) must be distinguished from its urban folklore (often the view from below). This is often done in terms of the clear rationalism of market efficiency for the well-to-do, against the benighted superstition of the uneducated masses. From the standpoint of the poor, however, a) hospitals cannot be trusted; anyone could see that more people went in than came out, and b) the wages were so low that children were killed by accident, pollution, and overwork anyway.

To understand the fear, or the imputation of malevolence, we must turn to the poor person's internet: rumor. The rumor, for instance, that the ambulance that seems to be patrolling the neighborhood, is actually on the hunt. Rumors like that may be found on the West Bank, in Recife, Istanbul, Manila, Bagdad. Rumor is performative because it longs to be repeated. It is also a type of political witnessing. In South Africa the slum dwellers refer to such practices of the well-to-do surgeons as witchcraft.

Sarah Wise describes the rumors of London in 1831. Bishop and Williams gave multiple confessions. A police magistrate wrote The Times that they confessed to more than sixty burkings. Wise provides a chapter on the other abductions, disappearances, missing-person reports, and rumored burkings. In addition to Italians they include, Irish, Africans, and children - over and over again, children. William Cobbett took the figure sixty and wondered that it was "probably hundreds." Twelve days after the Reform Bill was passed, the Anatomy Bill was introduced as part of the reforming, modernizing, cleansing, ordering bourgeoisie. Masters of workhouses, overseers of the poor, keepers of hospitals, and wardens of prisons could dispose bodies if unclaimed by relatives. Thus the poorest of the poor "gave" their bodies for the benefit of a privatized health science which only the rich could afford. Today, law in Belgium, Spain, and Brazil makes all adults universal organ donors unless individuals declare themselves otherwise. To the egalitarians in the legislatures this seems fair; to the poor in the neighborhoods it provides the authorities with all the power.

Cobbett's blistering critique endures. He cited Psalms, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Ecclesiastes, Genesis, and Isaiah on the sacred nature of the rites of burial, only omitting the myrrh, aloes, and linen with which the women treated the body of Jesus. His citation of holy scripture was a strategy of re-inserting social ethics into what was otherwise an economic arrangement. The arguments for the Bill were those of free trade. Cheap human bodies were the sign of national prosperity.

Furthermore, citing the experience of schools in Dublin and Paris, Cobbett argued that dissections were the foundation of bad medicine, and in any case were irrelevant to the main diseases afflicting industrial England - consumption. Indeed, the "Asian" cholera which arrived in 1832 to ravage the industrial metropolis was spread precisely by the systemic modernization of sewers and water-supply which was meant to "clean up" the great wen.

Cobbett did however name and praise the autonomous defenses of the rural poor who would club together to defray the expense of organizing their own grave-watches. He inveighed against the "carcass-cutting system" and "these advocates of free trade in your flesh, blood, and bones." He scorned the assumption to the utilitarian argument that there is no higher value than life, reminding his readers of other goals at least as valuable, and he named kindness, and loyalty to kith and kin. He refused to fetishize "life itself". Cobbett understood class analysis: "those bodies which have been worn out or debilitated by labors performed and privations endured for the benefit of the rich, are now, when breathless, to be sold and cut

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up for the benefit of those same rich."

Karl Marx's chapter on "The Working Day" became a guide to the measurement and analysis of exploitation. His mighty eloquence made the shocking comparison between capitalism and the vampire and the werewolf. "Capital is dead labor, that, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labor, and lives the more, the more labor it sucks."

His theme is working to death. His metaphors were taken from proletarian folklore of Europe, east and west, to which we'd add African, Caribbean, and Arabic contributions. "Ghoul" enters English vocabulary in the late 18th century from Arabic mythology in which it describes a grave-robbing demon.

Likewise with the word "zombie" which entered European vocabularies from west Africa and the Caribbean during the same era. The semantics which discovers the relationship between capitalist exploitation and organ extraction originates in the North and the South.

In November 1838 The Lancet referred to "practices which would disgrace a nation of cannibals." Nancy Scheper-Hughes has called them "The New Cannibalism." And so we pass from liberalism to neo-liberalism. We may shrug and say it is a dog-eat-dog world. Yet, it is not: a small class of people thrives by the consumption of the lifetimes and the organs of a greater class of people. CP

Peter Linebaugh is the author of The London Hanged (one of CounterPunch's top 100 books of the 20th century) and The Many-Headed Hydra, with Marcus Rediker.

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Davis, known locally as Eraser Head, showed up in chauffeur-driven gas guzzlers for environmental photo-ops. The inn owner, previously unengaged in the agitation to keep oil rigs out of her viewshed, inserted herself into the turmoil, sedate as it was, and was soon appearing in the *New York Times* as the lady who's saving the sea from Chevron. Her inn became a regular pit stop for bigwig Democrats, and she became the person who kept the derricks off the North coast. The grassroots people, who'd hoped for a permanent ban on offshore drilling, were shoved aside, and the safety of sea creatures has been in the well-oiled, well-funded hands of Democrats ever since.

So have the forests, what's left of them. When the North coast grassroots drew national attention to the grim fact that outside timber corporations were cashing in Mendocino and Humboldt county trees for short-term profit and long-term environmental and employment devastation, the grassroots turned to their Democratic officeholders for help. The Democrats, always ready to oblige, helped the corporations mop up what was left of both the private and public trees, and then, with public money freed up by Clinton, bought up untouched acres of forest at twice their already inflated value from Charles Hurwitz, a junk bond tycoon based in Texas who does big business deals with Senator Dianne Feinstein's husband.

The *New York Times*-owned Santa Rosa *Press Democrat* serves as major media stenographer for local Democrats. The paper was distraught at Gray Davis's recall as California's governor. "We just can't allow voters to monkeywrench things like this", the paper wailed editorially. "What if the mob goes after Wes or Patti or Mike and the rest of our progressive friends? It's too terrible to contemplate".

The Davis recall lost in Mendocino County. The Democrats managed to convince the minority of eligible voters who bothered with the recall election that Davis was better than the alternative. The alternative was, of course, a lateral move, electorally considered, and here we are again with the Democrats telling us that it's Kerry or another four years of Bush.

In Mendocino County, it's another four years of Thompson as methyl bromide's national advocate, while here with the home folks, Thompson's in-county rep, long ago secretly anointed by the Thompson Democrats to become a supervisor and thus begin her climb upwards to the imported brie, easily defeated an unblessed male Democrat to get the job.

In November, the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors will consist of five Democrats: a gay woman; a recovering alcoholic; a retired rock and roll musician; a trust fund hippie; and a Bly Guy who changed his name to Wildman: rural multiculturalism, Democrat style. CP

For 21 years Bruce Anderson edited The Anderson Valey Advertiser, in Boonville, northern California. In August of this year he and his wife Ling headed for Eugene craving rain and that brand of blood-thirsty self-righteousness that Oregon liberals have patented to alternate with the vindictive barbarism of the local Republicans. He promises to launch a new paper in the next few months.

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